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SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
10:30 A.M., 25 February 1975
Room S-126, CAPITOL

C O N T E N T S

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A LOOK AT LATIN AMERICA

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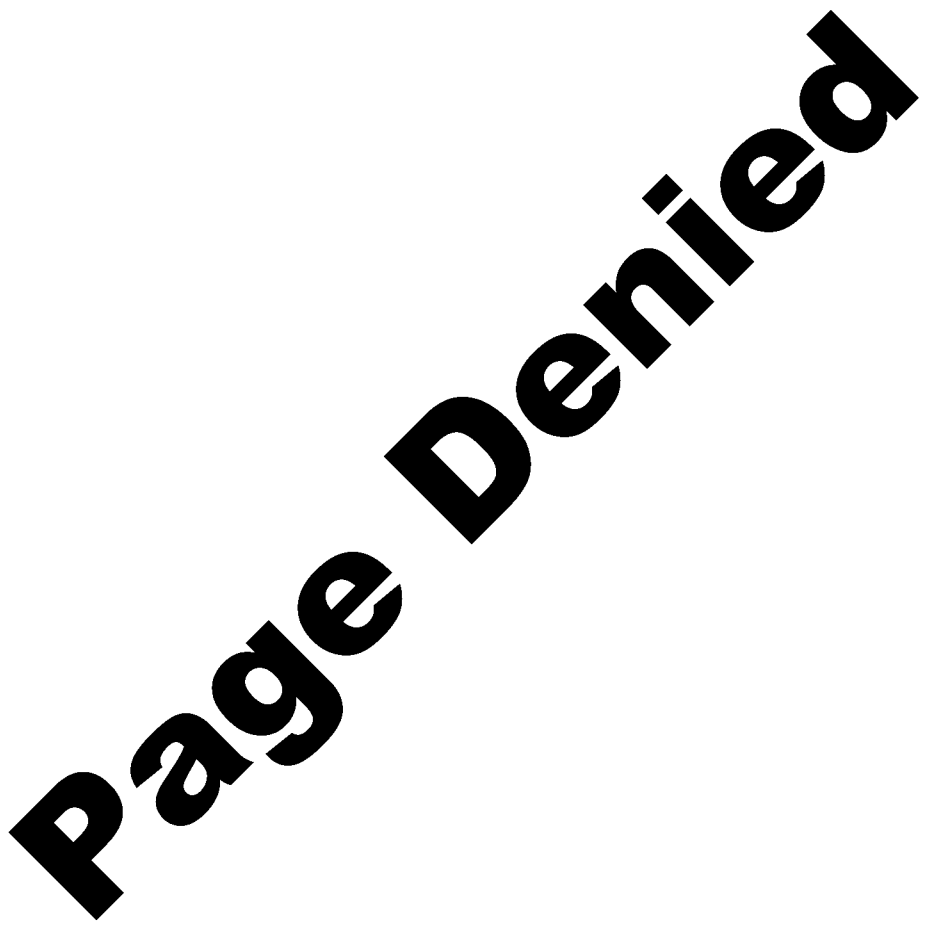

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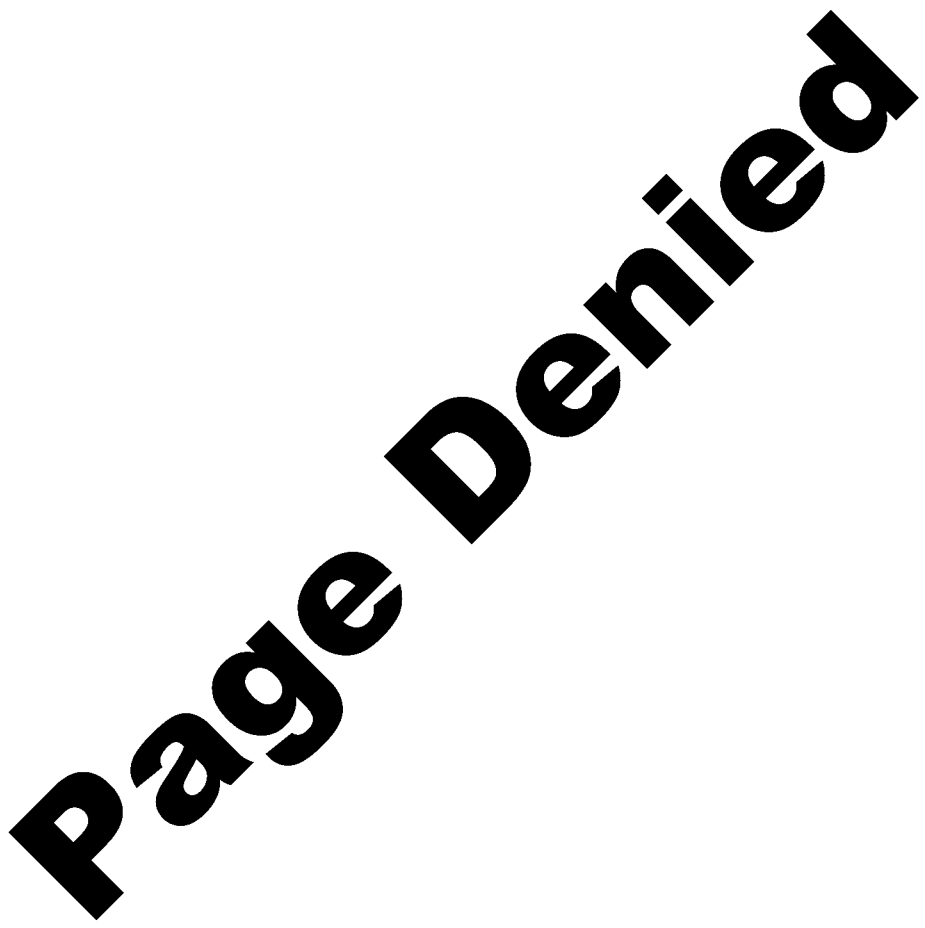

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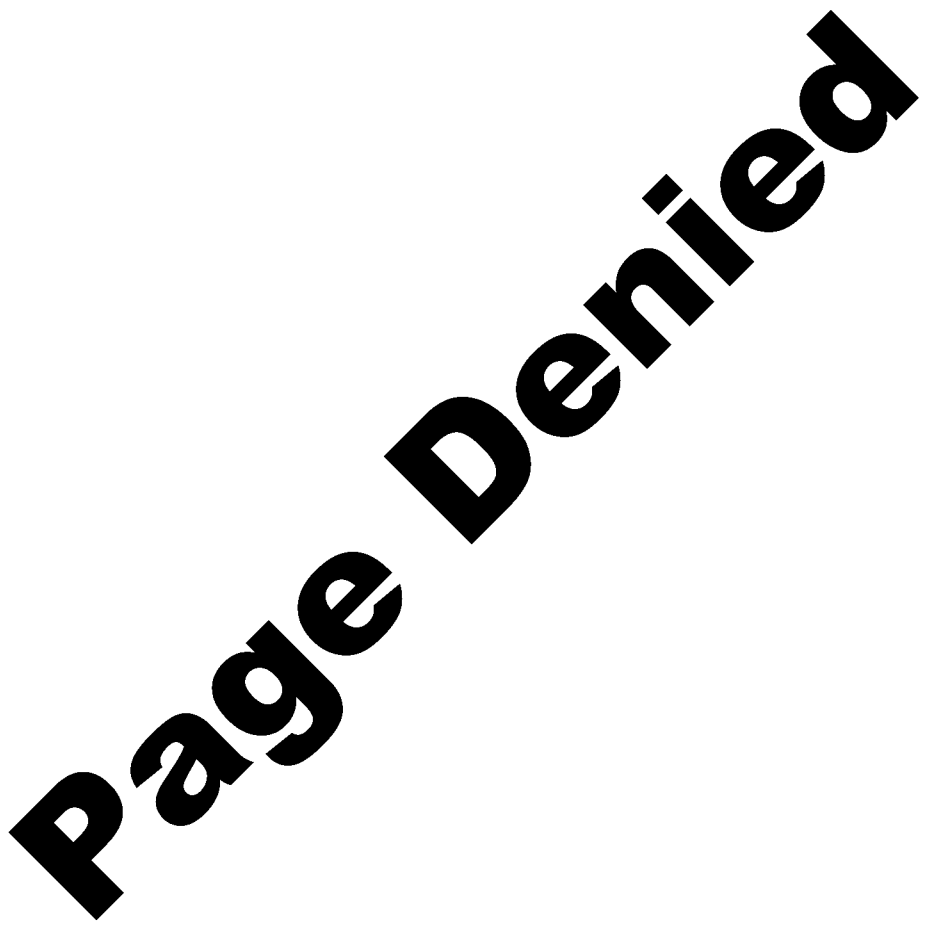

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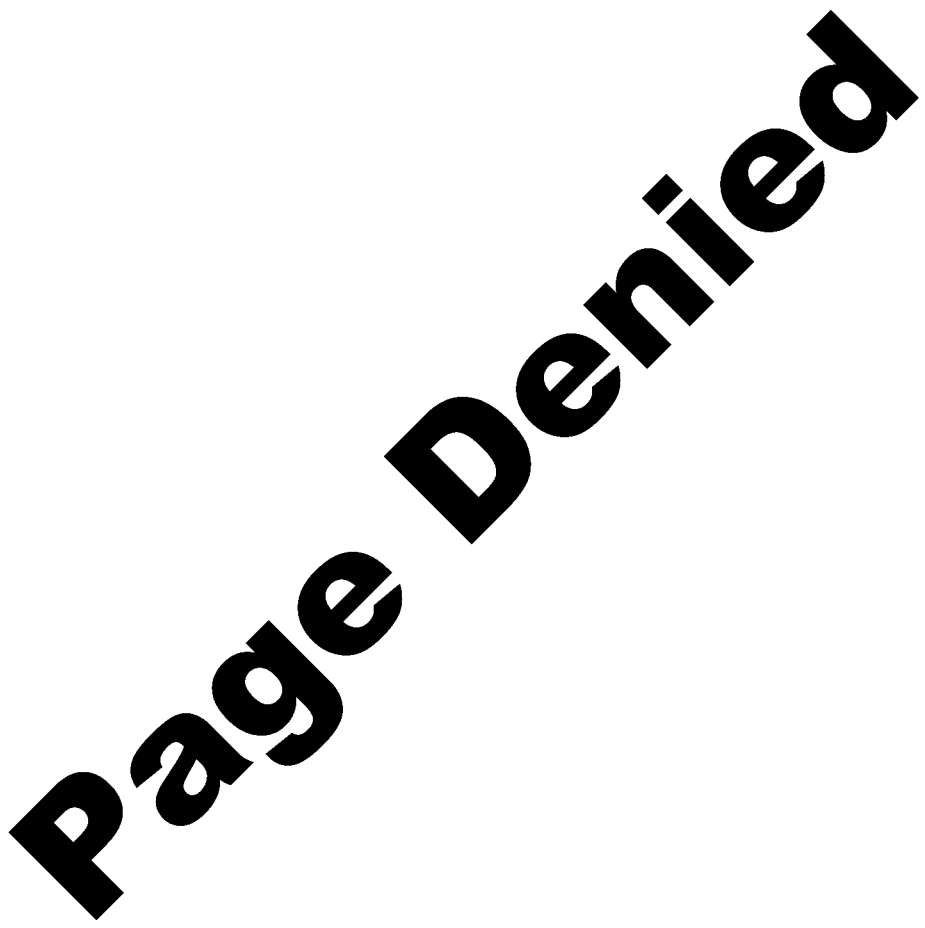

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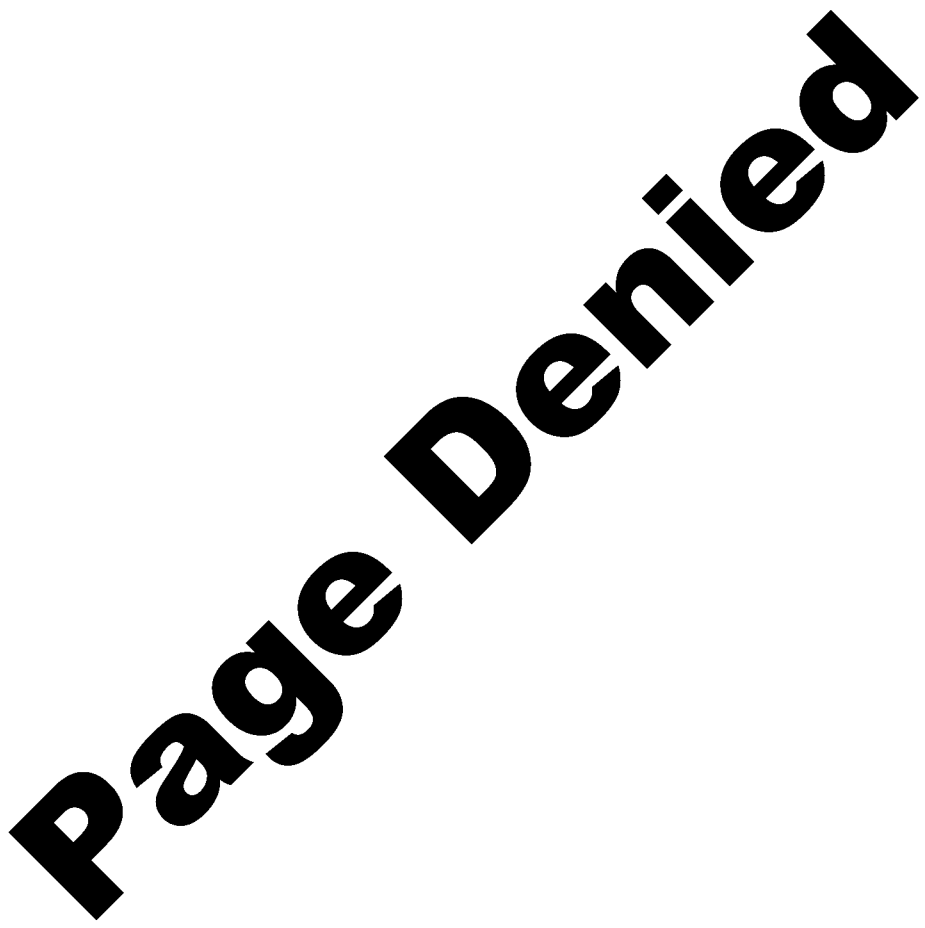

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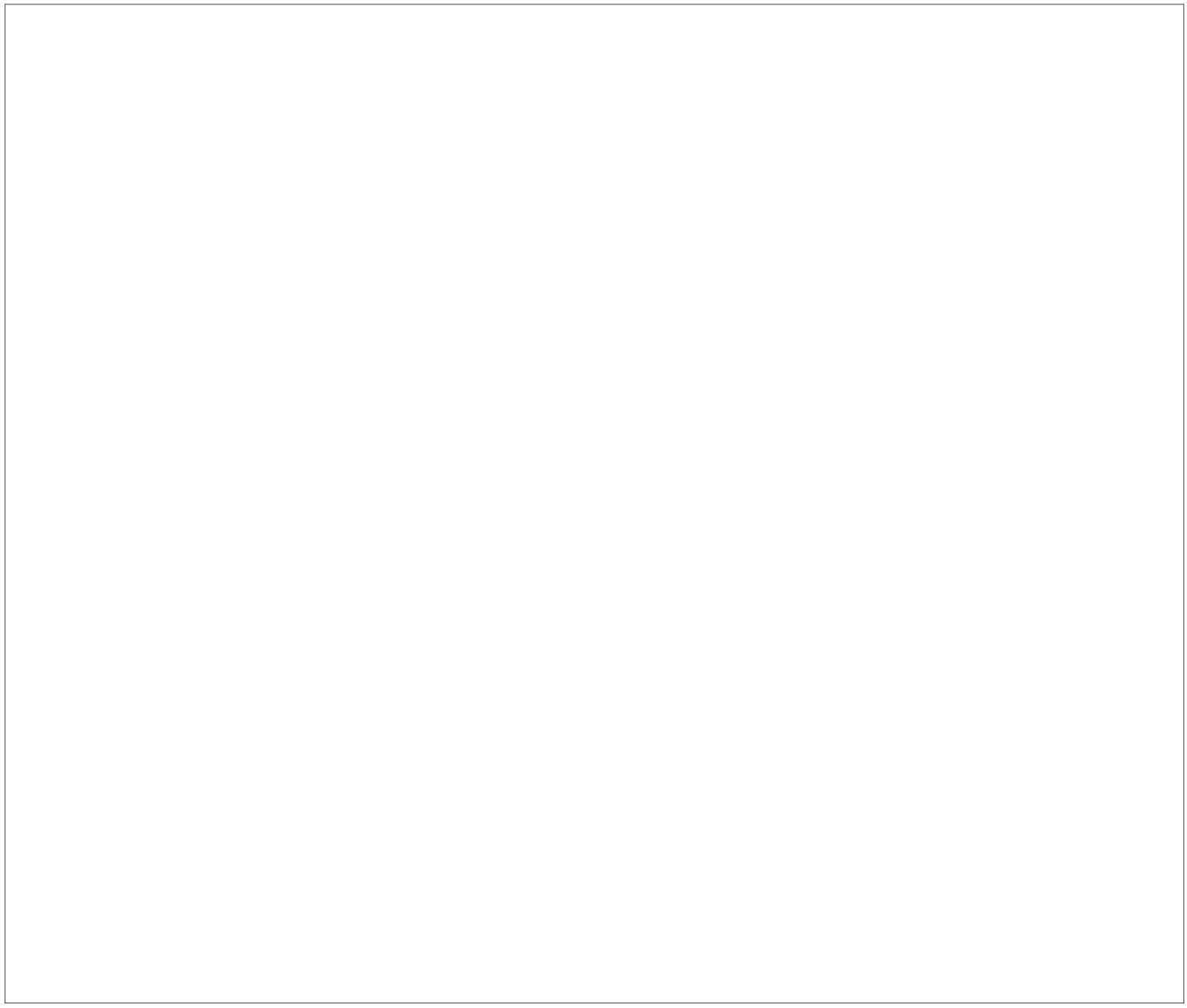

V. To round out the Latin America picture, Mr. Chairman, I would like just to touch on individual situations, and will gladly elaborate if you wish. These are Argentina, Chile.

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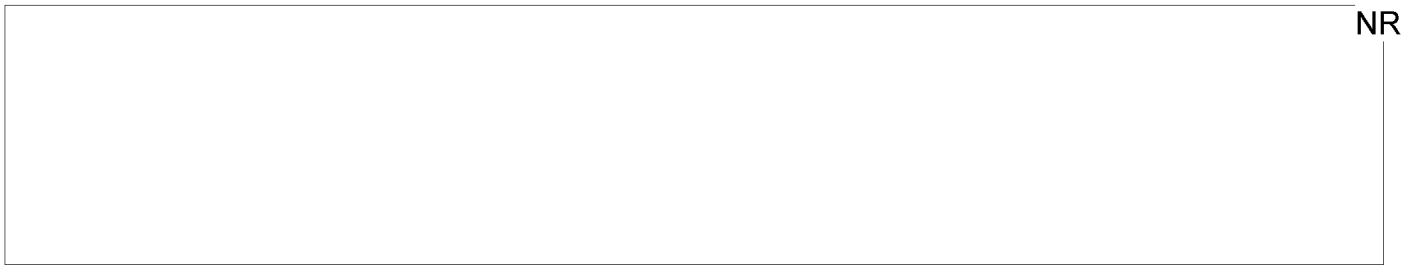

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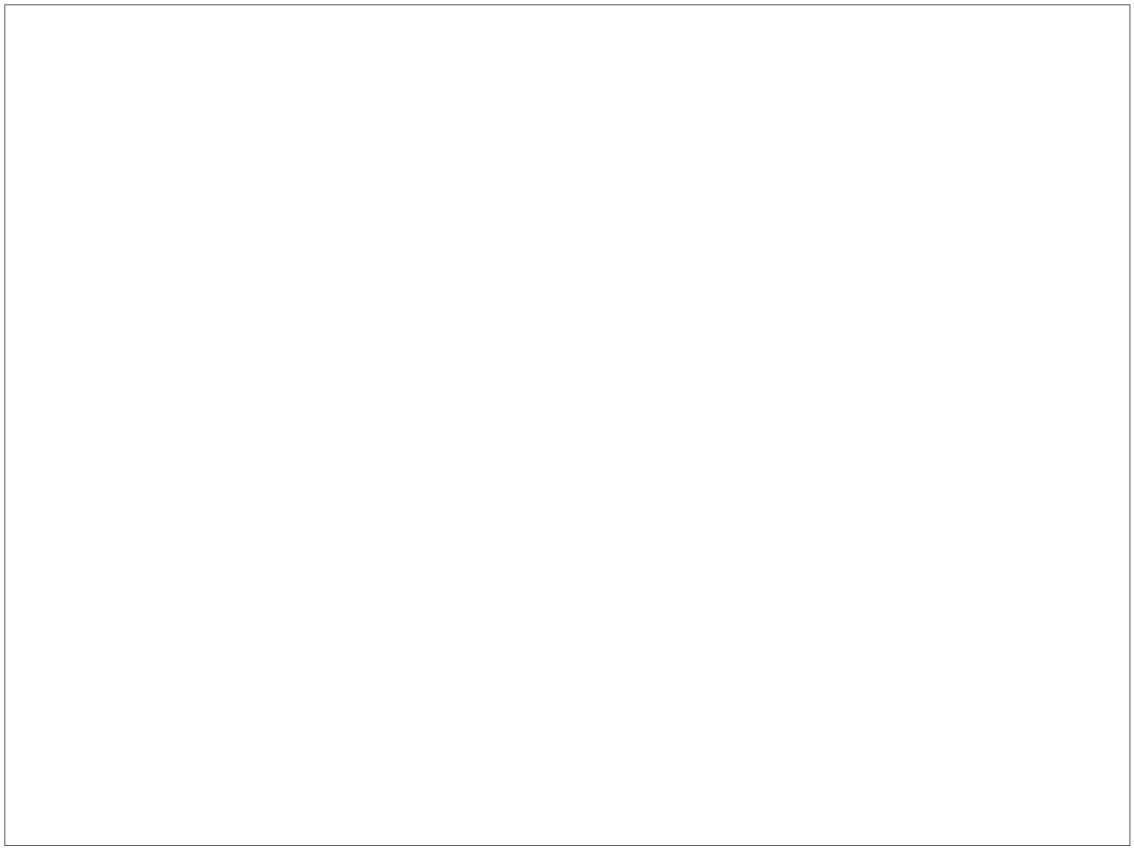

Argentina

B. Argentina remains beset with internal problems. The basic lack of confidence in the presidency of Juan Peron's widow has sharpened because of economic uncertainties, the terrorist problem, and the wide distrust of Mrs. Peron's principal adviser, Jose Lopez Rega.

1. Lopez Rega, a longtime lieutenant of Juan Peron, has made himself indispensable to Mrs. Peron and has isolated her from other advisers. Lopez

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runs, behind the scenes, the counter-terror forces and can effectively intimidate his critics.

2. Lopez's position has galvanized opposition within military, labor, business, and opposition party circles; yet they are reluctant to force the issue because there is no attractive alternative to Mrs. Peron's presidency. There are no specific indications that political tensions are near a critical point.

3. The government has begun to make some inroads against the urban terrorist problem, but it remains a primary concern.

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Chile

D. The military government in Chile, being largely isolated internationally, places high value on good relations with the US. Its leaders consider that they saved Chile from communism, and are baffled over their inability to get more political and economic support from Washington.

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2. In order to improve Chile's international image, the government is taking some steps on the human rights issue. Many political prisoners have been released, judicial processes have been speeded up, and new efforts are being

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made to curb maltreatment of detainees. Repression is definitely on the wane.

3. The military government is firmly in control but it worries about losing popular support

[redacted]

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18 February 1975

[redacted] CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

C O N T E N T S

[redacted] NR

LATIN AMERICA
Argentina
Chile

[redacted] NR

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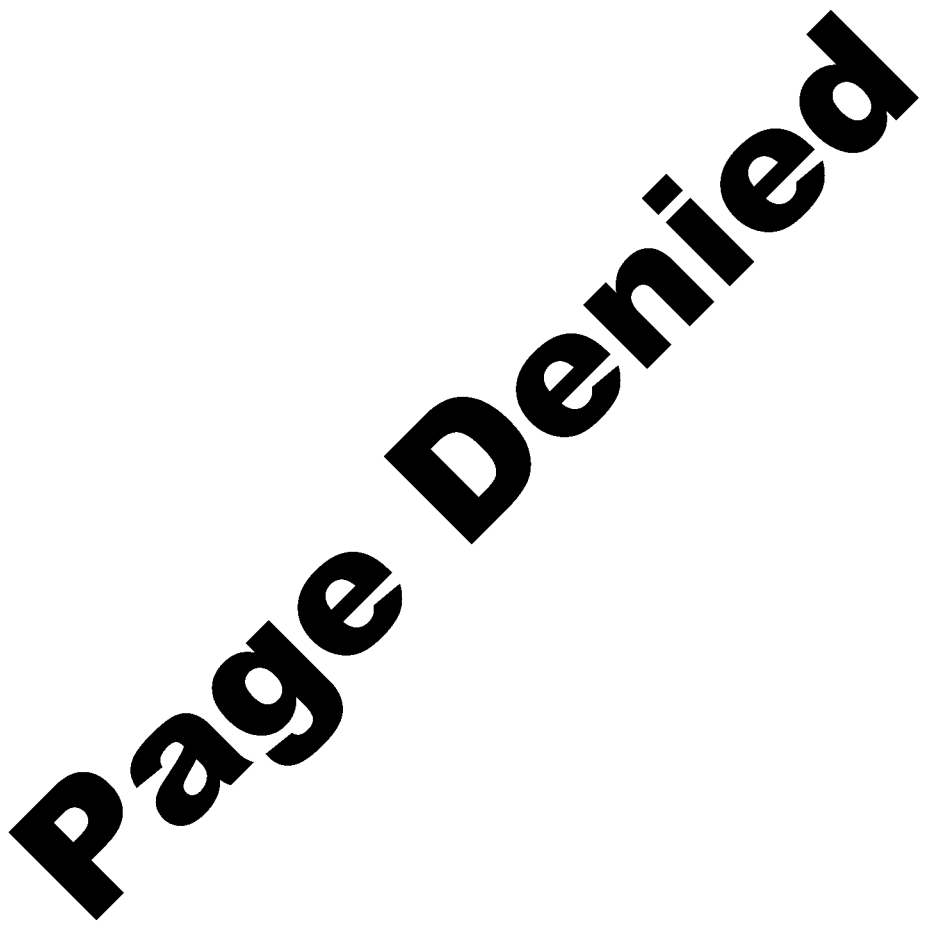

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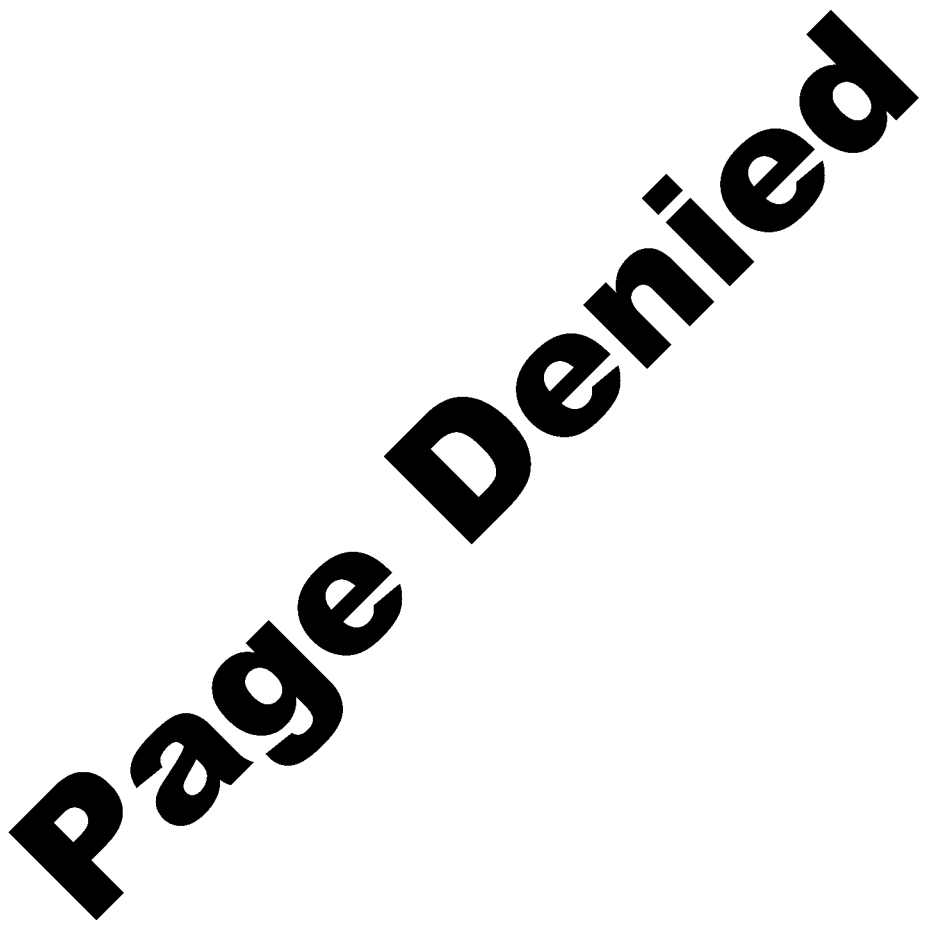

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18 February 1975

3.3(b)(1)

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CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

ARGENTINA

I. A storm centering on the role of controversial presidential adviser Lopez Rega developed in late January while President Peron was resting at an Atlantic beach resort.

A. Widespread opposition was voiced over the apparent free hand accorded Lopez Rega in conducting government business during the President's absence.

B. The creation of a presidential secretariat earlier in the month had concentrated power in Lopez Rega's hands and given him control over access to the President.

C. Adding to the unsettled state of affairs were reports of:

-- the President's sudden move to a nearby naval base from her resort quarters, possibly for security reasons

-- Lopez Rega's disappearance from public view for several days

-- widely circulating stories alleging that Lopez Rega and the President had a falling out

-- the visit of the military high command for talks

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with Mrs. Peron at the naval base

-- a new terrorist ultimatum threatening a campaign of "indiscriminate execution" of government officials.

D. The President cut short her stay and returned to the capital, evidently to stem the mounting rumors of a government crisis. Meanwhile, the interior minister took steps to upstage Lopez Rega in a calculated attempt to quiet the criticism of his superministerial role.

E. Cosmetic efforts to disguise Lopez Rega's influence will have little effect on those who distrust him: the military, Peronist labor, businessmen, and the opposition parties.

F. Nevertheless, the military will be reluctant to press too hard for his ouster. They fear that this might force Mrs. Peron to step down -- something they prefer to avoid because of the political problems it would raise.

G. If Mrs. Peron should resign she would be succeeded constitutionally by Senate President Allende or Chamber of Deputies President Lastiri in that order; new elections would probably be convoked.

II. The level of terrorism has lowered slightly, but security forces have a long way to go in ending it.

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A. Police and military cooperation has improved, but the terrorists retain a capability for carrying out random acts of violence at will. 3.3(b)(1)

B. Argentine [redacted] the People's Revolutionary Army -- the best organized terrorist group -- has been reduced in strength by one-third. Despite increased arrests under the state of siege now in effect, this estimate is probably exaggerated.

C. The army has taken a more direct role in counter-insurgency operations by sending crack troops into Tucuman Province -- a principal guerrilla stronghold.

D. We expect, however, that urban terrorism will remain a primary concern of Mrs. Peron's government, as extremists try to make good on their threat to kill government and Peronist officials, security personnel, and businessmen.

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18 February 1975

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CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

CHILE

I. The latest freeing of political prisoners took place on February 13, when a group of 27 left Chile for exile in Venezuela.

A. This group included five important personalities from the Allende era who had been imprisoned on remote Dawson island.

B. Of the 39 notables originally imprisoned there only 17 remain in custody -- at a less austere detention facility.

C. A semi-official committee is seeking countries willing to receive almost 1,000 persons convicted and serving sentences. Timing and procedure for the release of sentenced prisoners has yet to be announced, however.

D. The granting of safe conduct out of the country to persons who have sought asylum in foreign embassies has become routine.

D. There has been only very limited progress toward the restoration of due process safeguards, however. The Chilean equivalent of habeas corpus, for example

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remains suspended. The same is true, of course, of general political rights.

1. There is likely to be gradual progress in this area, as the government appears to accord great importance to improving Chile's international image.

2. It appears to have decided to accept an international fact-finding mission if the UN's Human Rights Commission requests it -- despite recent intimations that Chile will no longer permit such entry unless the commissions can demonstrate similar access to the Soviet Union and Cuba.

II. The current prescription of economic recovery calls for movement from a state-dominated to a social market economy, decentralization, curtailed government spending, encouragement of private domestic and foreign investment, and reliance on market forces to allocate resources efficiently.

A. The armed forces understand the need for a painful period of adjustment. They are concerned, however, over the timing, extent, and distribution, of austerity and sacrifice.

1. Army officers, the most attuned to popular attitudes, worry that discontent could turn into general opposition to the government. They also

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want to insure that all sectors of society share in the sacrifices.

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3. The outcome of this controversy between the economists and officers may depend in large part on how the mix of world food, fuel, and copper prices plays out, and on the level of new international assistance Chile can obtain.

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